

**DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Bureau of Parks and Lands**

**Seboomook Unit Advisory Committee Meeting
Rockwood Community Center, 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
June 8, 2005**

MEETING NOTES

AGENDA

6:00 Welcome, Introductions
6:15 Planning Process/ Role of Advisory Committee
6:30 Review and Discussion of the Preliminary Plan
Comments/Questions
8:45 Next Steps

Welcome, Introductions -- *Ralph Knoll, Deputy Director*

Advisory Committee Public Members:

Rick Sylvester, Seboomook Wilderness Campground
Paul Fichtner, Penobscot Lake Lodge
Greg Shute, Chewonki
Diano Circo, Natural Resources Council of Maine
Jennifer Mills, Windsor, Pittston Farm
Sarah Medina, North Maine Woods/Seven Islands
Paul Napolitano, Ragged Lake Riders (snowmobile club)
Sandra Neily, Greenville
Alexandra Connover, Willimantic, guide
Kevin Bernier, Great Lakes Hydro America
Dan Legere, Greenville, guide
John Banks, Bangor

Advisory Committee State Agency Staff:

Michelle Belanger, Maine Warden Service, Whitewater Boating Specialist
Steve Day, Maine Forest Service
Doug Kane, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Greenville

Bureau of Parks and Lands Staff:

Ralph Knoll, Deputy Director, Bureau of Parks and Lands
Kathy Eickenberg, Seboomook Plan Coordinator
Pete Smith, Western Regions Lands Manager
Leigh Hoar III, Western Region Lands Forester

Matt LaRoche, Penobscot River Corridor Manager
Tom Charles, Chief of Silviculture
Joe Wiley, Wildlife Biologist/IF&W
Scott Ramsay, Supervisor, Off-Road Vehicle Program
Cindy Bastey, Chief Planner

Approximately 20 members of the public were also in attendance.

Planning Process/ Role of Advisory Committee -- Kathy Eickenberg, Plan Coordinator

Kathy reviewed the planning process, its status to date, and projected schedule. Four public meetings have been held to date. The preliminary draft plan reviews what is known about the resources and management issues. The next draft plan (end of August) will propose management recommendations in accordance with “allocations” or management zones defined based on the resource values (guided by the Integrated Resource Policy developed by the Bureau with considerable public input). A second Advisory Committee will be held to review the draft plan. The plan would then be revised and a third meeting of the Advisory Committee may or may not be held prior to a general public meeting to review and discuss the plan (October). The goal is to have a final plan, adopted by the Commissioner, by the end of the year.

The following handouts were distributed to the Committee (attached):

Title 12, Section 1847. Management of public reserved lands (statute)
Role of the Advisory Committee
Excerpt from the Integrated Resource Policy guidance document (pages 10-18)

Review and Discussion of the Preliminary Plan

Summary Presentations (Highlights from the Preliminary Plan):

Regional Context -- *Kathy Eickenberg, Plan Coordinator*
Recreation Uses and Resources -- *Pete Smith, Regional Lands Manager*
Natural Areas, Fisheries and Wildlife Resources -- *Joe Wiley, Biologist*
Historical/Cultural Resources -- *Kathy Eickenberg*
Timber Resources -- *Tom Charles, Chief of Silviculture*

Comments and Questions:

Recreation

- How would a Backcountry or Remote Recreation allocation affect use of a water body? *Does not directly affect use of the waterbody; just use of the adjacent lands. You would not see developed access sites.*
- How would it affect uses on the waterbody, like boating, sledding, floatplanes? *We have policies that typically restrict wheeled vehicles to designated trails, but this does not affect snowmobiles. We may not have any jurisdiction over use on waterbodies. We'll have to look into it.*
- Where is the boundary of the Seboomook Unit in relation to the waterbodies? *State lands begin 10 feet (horizontally) from the normal high water level of Seboomook and Canada Falls Lakes, as these lands are part of the federally licensed hydropower West Branch Storage Project, and are retained by Great Lakes Hydro.*

- Does the state land completely surround Seboomook and Canada Falls Lakes? *For Seboomook, except for a few private camps (only a handful), the state owns all around the lake. For Canada Falls Lake, the Passamaquoddy Tribe owns nearly all the shoreline that we do not own, although there may be a small portion in another ownership. We'll have to check. [Note: We have since found there is a gap between the State and Passamaquoddy Tribal lands around the southerly end of the Alder Brook arm of the lake, encompassing about a mile of shoreline. See map enclosure.]*
- Will people have to pay fees to use the area? *The Unit is within the North Maine Woods System and is subject to North Maine Woods fees for this season. We are currently involved in discussions with NMW regarding the future relationship of the Unit to the NMW system and fees structure. This issue will be part of what we address in the Management Plan.*
- Is NMW managing the campsites on the Unit? *Yes, under our current arrangement.*
- Is there a formal agreement between the State and NMW for this, and if so can we get a copy of it? *Yes*
- Is it still open for discussion whether the Penobscot River Corridor will be extended further into the Seboomook Unit? *Yes.*
- Does the State have a vision of how it wants to manage this Unit? Do you have goals and a way to judge whether these goals are met down the road? For example, does the state want this area to be affordable for the average citizen? Does it want to increase use? *Determining that is part of this process. We do not have it all figured out; we are looking for input on it. Those are good thoughts in that direction.*

Significant Natural Resources and Wildlife Resources

- How will wood turtles be protected in areas subject to timber harvesting? *Our timber management is protective of wood turtle habitat.*
- Will there be more loon monitoring this year, and in future years? *Yes, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has a contract for continued monitoring of loons on Seboomook, Canada Falls Lake, and Baker Lake this year and next.*
- Is there any evidence that water level fluctuations are limiting loon nest success? *Loons are adapted to swimming in water to such a degree that it is difficult for them to walk on land. Their nests have to be right on the edge of the water, which makes them susceptible to flooding or stranding. We might see if water level fluctuations were a limiting factor on these lakes with a couple years of monitoring under the stable lake conditions that will be in place from now on, beginning this year.*
- Could loon nesting platforms help on these lakes? *No, loon nesting platforms are designed to provide floating nest sites to compensate for large fluctuations in water levels. These lakes will not be fluctuating as much as in the past, under the new federal license conditions.*
- Will the deed restrictions on recreation improvements related to loon nest sites apply to existing facilities such as the existing boat launches? *It is not clear whether the restriction on "new improvements" within 1000 feet of a nest site (copy attached) applies to existing facilities. We will check with USFWS on this.*
- Are there any other restrictions on the use of these lands? *There are no other broad deed restrictions. [Note: there are agreements that were entered into with donors for the acquisition that the St. John Ponds parcel and Big Spencer Mountain parcel would be managed as eco-reserves.]*

- Why are timber harvesting and motorized use not allowed on the St. John Ponds parcel? *These restrictions relate to the designation of this parcel as an eco-reserve. These uses are prohibited under the statute that established eco-reserves. [Note: to see statute go to <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/12/title12sec1805.html>].*
- There are no salmon in the North Branch. *We note this error; the fishery there is a brook trout fishery.*

Historical and Cultural Resources

- The Pittston Farm museum has a nice collection of logging era artifacts. Would be nice to have the new owners continue to operate the facility as a historic farm.
- The prospective new owners are planning to operate Pittston Farm as an historic farm, and will be restoring the museum and blacksmith shop.

Timber Resources

- Is revenue generated from timber harvesting on the Unit used for management of the this Unit? *No. All timber sale revenue goes into one account that is dedicated to management costs for all Public Reserved lands according to need. This means that if no timber is harvested on this Unit for a period of time, there will still be monies available from timber sales elsewhere.*
- Will there be a new timber inventory of this Unit? *We do inventories on a 5-year cycle. The Seboomook Unit will be at the top of the list for the next cycle of inventories.*
- Will the Advisory Committee be involved in determining how timber is managed on this Unit, or just in determining where on the Unit timber may be cut? *The latter; the allocation process determines which areas are suitable for timber harvest; how it is done is not specified in the Plan, but is determined based on guidelines developed for multiple use forest management in the Integrated Resource Policy document. [Note: all Public Reserved lands that are managed for timber are “green” certified, except new acquisitions such as this Unit, that missed the initial certification process. However, these lands will be managed as if they were certified, and in accordance with the guidance on Renewable Resources provided in the Integrated Resource Policy document.]*
- What if there are forest fires in the eco-reserves? Will they be suppressed? Will existing roads in the eco-reserve parcels be maintained? *The general policy is to fight any forest fires on the eco-reserves. There has not been a decision made regarding the roads at this point.*
- Who cuts the wood on these lands? *The Bureau puts timber harvests out to bid to private logging contractors.*

Next Steps

- Comments on the Preliminary Plan will be accepted until August 1. Send to Kathy Eickenberg at Bureau of Parks and Lands, 22 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0022.
- The Bureau will develop management allocation recommendations over the summer.
- A draft will be sent to the Advisory Committee and posted on the website by the end of August.
- The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be in September.
- The Bureau will be meeting with North Maine Woods this summer and will be getting a proposal to the Access Work Group for review and comment, on a new arrangement for the Seboomook Unit relative to the NMW system, perhaps by the end of the summer, so that this component can be addressed in the next draft of the management plan.